

towns in southern Western Australia, where an adequate water supply is present (Long, 1988: *APB Tech Ser. 1*). There are reports of this species unsuccessfully colonising near roadhouses on the North West Coastal Highway east of Denham, following periods of high rainfall (Sedgwick 1965: *West. Aust. Nat.* 9: 154). Their dependence on a reliable water supply means they are unlikely to become established in arid areas (Blakers *et al.* 1984: *RAOU Atlas of Australian Birds*). For this reason we believe that this record on Bernier Island is probably of transient birds and this introduced species is unlikely to become established on this important nature reserve.

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Rainbow Lorikeets breeding in Eastern Goldfields – On 16 June 1993 we observed a pair of Rainbow Lorikeets, *Trichoglossus haematodus* which presumably escaped from captivity, squabbling with a pair of Port Lincoln Ringnecks, *Platycercus zonarius* over a hollow in a Salmon Gum in Coolgardie. A nearby Salmon Gum was in flower and the lorikeets were feeding in it. An inspection one week later indicated no further activity. However on 6 July a pair was observed to fly from the same hollow. Several days later the pair was captured and relocated back into captivity and two white eggs removed from the hollow. Following this incident the Port Lincoln Ringnecks established themselves in the same hollow. Although there is some doubt whether the lorikeet chicks would have survived, this record does suggest that Rainbow Lorikeets are aggressive nesters with the potential to displace locally indigenous species.

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Dewfall in the desert – J. Gentilli notes that there is a need to study the role of dew in arid environments (1993: *West. Aust. Nat.* 19: 201–218). Some observations made at Wanjarri Nature Reserve are relevant to this.

Wanjarri Nature Reserve lies just east of the road between Leinster and Wiluna, and lies within the 200mm rainfall zone. When I stayed there from 11 – 14 August it had been a year of exceptional rainfall. At the old shearing shed the soil was damp and the ephemeral vegetation lush and waist-high.

After arriving at Wanjarri we checked and emptied the rain gauge. It did not rain during our stay, however each day when the rain gauge was checked at dawn it recorded 0.5mm of moisture – presumably the heavy dew which dripped from the ground flora. By 10am it had evaporated and the gauge was dry. This rate of dewfall must contribute significantly to the availability of water in the community. It also highlights the fact that cumulative rainfall

totals recorded from places like Wanjarri are probably an underestimate due to evaporative losses.

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Welcome Swallows *Hirundo neoxena* may have caused the first fatality attributed to birds in WA – On 2 September 1983 Neville Flynn, aged 42, from Osborne Park died as a result of a fatal disease transmitted by Welcome Swallow nest or faecal material. Mr Flynn died in hospital from pneumonia (3 days), Cryptococcal meningitis (3 months) (P. R. Manning, Registrar General's Office, pers. comm. 1990).

Approximately six months prior to his death Mr Flynn had held a ladder for a colleague who removed two Welcome Swallows' nests from the roof of Mr Flynn's workshop. One of the nests disintegrated as it was being removed, showering him with fine particles of nest material and/or droppings (Vince Condon, *Weekend News* 12–13 November 1983).

Mr Flynn later swept up the nest debris, apparently further inhaling the bird fungus, *Cryptococcus neoformans*, which doctors found in his body. Dr J. C. McNulty, then Commissioner for Public Health, said "it is recognised in the books that *Cryptococcus* is transmitted by pigeons to man but it is still a most unusual cause of death anywhere in the world."

Lumbar punctures confirmed, soon after Mr Flynn went to hospital, that he had fungal meningitis caused by *C. neoformans*, which was also discovered in nest samples taken from the workshop.

Pigeon excreta is the most common source of *C. neoformans*. The yeast develops on the creatine (nitrogenous substance) in pigeon manure. The yeast is carried in the intestinal tract of pigeons. Pulmonary cryptococcosis has occurred in workmen who have been exposed to the yeast while demolishing old buildings where pigeons have roosted. Most of the cryptococcal infections occur from inhalation of the fungus along with the dust from areas enriched with pigeon manure (W. Weber 1979: *Health Hazards From Pigeons, Starlings and English Sparrows*, Thomson Publications, California).

I would like to thank Kevin Campbell, Department of Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare, Western Australia who alerted me to this incident.

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Distribution and possible butterfly pollination of *Parsonsia* – Rye (1987, in: Marchant *et al.*, *Flora of the Perth Region*, Dept of Agriculture, Perth) describes *Parsonsia diaphanophleba* F. Muell. (Apocynaceae) as a woody climber endemic to the Perth region and restricted to the